

Transactions

AUGUST 2001

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



Calling All Public Transit Riders — Help Test TransLink® Smart Card

Do you want to be the first on your block to use a transit “smart card”? MTC is recruiting volunteers to participate in the TransLink® pilot program, which will allow travelers to pay fares on multiple Bay Area transit systems with a single card.

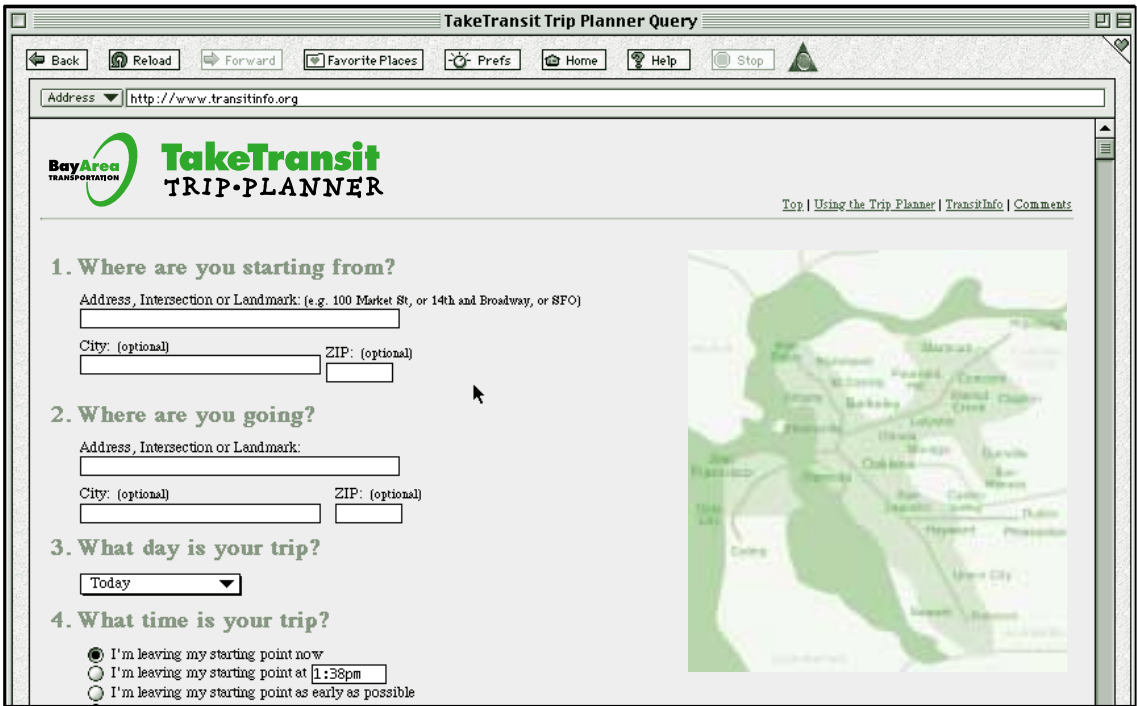


The size of a credit card, the TransLink® card contains a powerful computer chip that can be loaded with a stored value equivalent to cash, passes and/or ticket books. When travelers pass the card near a card reader at a station or on a transit vehicle, the correct fare will be deducted automatically, including applicable discounts and transfer credits.

During the six-month pilot program getting under way this fall, volunteers will be able to use the TransLink® card on selected routes of AC Transit, Golden Gate Transit, San Francisco Muni and the Valley Transportation Authority in Santa Clara County, as well as selected stations along the BART and Caltrain rail systems. To check whether your commute qualifies, visit <www.translink.org> to see which stations, ferries and vehicles will accept TransLink® cards during the pilot program.

If all goes well in the pilot program, TransLink® could begin to go regionwide in late 2002.

To participate in the pilot program, call the recruiting company, MSI, at 888.853.2938.



Plan Your Transit Trips Online

DETAILED ITINERARIES ARE ONLY A MOUSE-CLICK AWAY

MTC has launched a unique, new service for Bay Area transit riders — instant, online trip planning. Dubbed TakeTransitSM, the Web-based service generates personalized itineraries for getting around the Bay Area by bus, train and ferry. TakeTransitSM is the latest enhancement to the Bay Area Transit Information Web page (www.transitinfo.org), a site operated by MTC that attracts an average of 16,000 visitors a day. ♦ To plan your trip, just type in the address, intersection or landmark you’re departing from and your destination, then click your mouse. The system will tell you which routes to take, when and where to board, and where to transfer, with detailed maps showing how to walk to the nearest transit stop or your final destination. Since there’s often more than one way to get from point A to point B, you have the option of requesting the fastest or cheapest route, or the route with fewest transfers or least amount of walking. ♦ TakeTransitSM currently covers AC Transit, BART, San Francisco Muni, Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (County Connection), Union City Transit, Emery Go-Round and four regional ferry services. At the moment, more than 400 routes and 12,000 bus stops and transit stations are included, figures that will grow exponentially as MTC incorporates data for the remaining Bay Area transit agencies over the next 18 months.

“HIP” Grants Fuel New Housing

Around the Bay Area, empty or underused lots adjacent to public transit hubs will soon bloom with attractive townhouses and apartments, thanks in part to MTC’s release in July of \$9 million in Housing Incentive Program (HIP) grants.

This first round of HIP grant money will reward 15 cities for fostering compact housing with easy access to public transit lines. The grants are keyed to project densities — the more units per acre, the higher the grant amount. Affordable units earn a bonus.

The HIP program builds on MTC’s Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program, which funds “community vitality” projects

such as new or improved bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, and plazas and streetscapes near transit centers. In a synergistic twist, MTC’s HIP guidelines call for cities to use the new grants to fund more TLC-type projects.

The inaugural HIP funding will help create 5,323 units of new housing, with 5,541 market-rate bedrooms and 2,060 affordable bedrooms — all within one-third mile of a rail, bus or rapid-transit line.

MTC announced the HIP awards at press conferences in Dublin and Vallejo, on the sites of two new housing developments. The city of Dublin received a \$1.3 million HIP grant as an incentive to build a mixed-use housing, office

and retail development with up to 1,500 apartments adjacent to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station.

The city of Vallejo’s \$382,000 HIP grant is associated with development of the Sereno Village Apartments, which will provide 125 affordably priced units near an existing shopping center and bus hub.

“We really see the Housing Incentive Program as crucial to helping cities do the right thing — provide affordable housing, rejuvenate downtowns and encourage transit use. This program is smart growth in action,” commented Doug Shoemaker, policy director for the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California and a member of the MTC Advisory Council, which reviewed HIP applications.



A view of the Sereno Village Apartments soon to be under construction in Vallejo

Calendar

THURSDAY
AUGUST 23, 2001

1:30 pm
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Partnership Legislative Committee

TUESDAY
AUGUST 28, 2001

10 a.m.
MetroCenter, Staff Conference Room
Regional Bicycle Master Plan
Project Oversight Committee

Note: Dates, times and locations of MTC meetings may change. Please confirm by calling 510.464.7787. Agendas and updated meeting schedules are posted on MTC’s web site: <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Upcoming Events

2001 Bay Area Ozone Attainment Plan
Public outreach meetings (late August)

Visit <www.baaqmd.gov> for more details, or call 415.749.4900.

2001 Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the RTP Environmental Impact Report
Public outreach meetings/hearings (September).

Visit <www.mtc.ca.gov> for more details, or call 510.464.7787.

Regional Agencies Smart Growth Strategy
Public workshops: one will be held in each county on a series of Saturdays (September and October)

Visit <www.abag.ca.gov/planning/smartgrowth> for details, or call 510.464.7900.

Conferences

THURSDAY–SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 13–16, 2001

Hyatt Regency Embarcadero, San Francisco



Rail-Volution 2001:
Building Livable Communities With Transit

Featuring U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta, more than 60 workshops and 15 tours showcasing transit-oriented development around the Bay Area

Registration fee is \$375 (with a \$50 discount if you register before Aug. 24); tours are extra.

To register online, visit <www.railvolution.com>.

For more information, call 888.788.7077 or e-mail <convene@aol.com>.

Local sponsors include MTC and Bay Area transit agencies.

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 28, 2001

8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Music Hall, San Jose State University



Silicon Valley Projections 2001

Panel discussions will examine quality of life issues, including transportation and housing, environment and land use, education and housing, and energy reliability.

To register, visit <www.svmg.org>.

For more information, call 408.501.7862 or e-mail <mwero@svm.org>.

MTC is cosponsoring this event.

Commission Actions

June 27, 2001

- Amended San Francisco’s new Transbay Terminal into the Transportation Improvement Program, making \$5.6 million in federal funds available for planning and preliminary design of the project to get under way. (Resolution No. 3300, revised)
- Approved principles for addressing a \$2 billion shortfall for strengthening the region’s state-owned toll bridges. The plan calls for supplementing regional funds — to come from a permanent extension of the \$1 seismic surcharge on bridge tolls — with state and federal funds.
- Approved the FY 2001–02 MTC budget. MTC’s operating expenses increased 13.2 percent over the prior year’s budget, reflecting MTC’s growing responsibilities. (Resolution No. 3363)

July 25, 2001

- Adopted the Final Plan for the Regional Welfare-to-Work Transportation Planning Project. The plan calls for closing gaps in the regional transportation network that make it difficult for low-income residents to get to jobs and basic services. (Resolution No. 3405)
- Allocated \$18 million to 22 Bay Area cities under the Transportation for Livable Communities capital program and MTC’s new Housing Incentive Program. (Resolution No. 3398)
- Adopted the \$40 million Regional Express Bus Program, which calls for deploying 102



low-emission coaches along freeway high-occupancy-vehicle lanes and major arterials. (Resolution No. 3385)

Project CLEAR Targets Region’s Worst Freeway

Help has arrived for the region’s No.1 bottleneck in the form of the CLEAR I-80 Demonstration Corridor Project, launched in July by the California Highway Patrol (CHP), Caltrans and MTC.

CLEAR stands for “clearing lanes effectively and rapidly,” and that’s just what the sponsors intend to do over the next year along Interstate 80 from State Route 4 to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The 16-mile stretch of freeway has topped Caltrans’ list of the 10 worst Bay Area congestion spots for nine of the last 10 years. (See adjacent Facts and Figures).



The CHP is deploying additional Highway Patrol units, while MTC’s Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways is spending over \$100,000 to step up Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) tow truck service, which assists motorists in distress. The goal is to aggressively enforce carpool-lane rules and to remove stalls, accidents and debris before minor incidents turn into major jams.

The sponsors will alert travelers to trouble ahead via changeable message signs, radio advisories and the MTC-run TravInfo® project, which provides up-to-the-minute traffic information via a free phone number, 817.1717.

After the pilot project concludes in June 2002, plans call for applying the most effective traffic management techniques to other high-traffic corridors around the Bay Area.

Facts & Figures

Top Bay Area Congestion Hot Spots

If you like to trade commute war stories around the water cooler, now you have some ammunition: Caltrans has just released a list of the Bay Area’s 10 worst congestion locations for the year 2000. It should come as no surprise that five of the routes go into and out of Silicon Valley, the region’s economic powerhouse, and that three others involve approaches to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge — one on the west side and two on the east. One of those approaches is the region’s No.1 trouble spot: the morning westbound commute along Interstate 80 in the East Bay, which has been targeted for a congestion-busting blitz (see adjacent “Project CLEAR” story). Rounding out the list is a stretch of Highway 101 in Marin County. Overall, the daily hours of delay on Bay Area freeways increased by a staggering 38 percent between 1999 and 2000, the biggest one-year jump since Caltrans began collecting these statistics in 1981.

10 Worst Congestion Locations in 2000

| 2000 Rank | Route, Direction, County | Daily Peak-Period Delay in Vehicle Hours* | 1999 Rank |
|-----------|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | I-80, westbound, a.m. – Alameda/Contra Costa County Route 4 to San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge metering lights | 10,340 | 1 |
| 2 | I-680, southbound, a.m. – Alameda County Sunol Road to south of Route 262 | 8,880 | 2 |
| 3 | I-880, southbound, a.m. – Alameda County South of Route 84 to north of Dixon Landing Road | 8,210 | 3 |
| 4 | U.S. 101, southbound, p.m. – Santa Clara County Fair Oaks Avenue to 13th Street | 5,510 | 8 |
| 5 | I-80 and U.S. 101, eastbound & northbound, p.m. – San Francisco County Army Street to west end of San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge | 5,180 | 4 |
| 6 | U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. – Marin County Rowland Boulevard to I-580 | 5,060 | 7 |
| 7 | U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. – San Mateo County I-380 to Hillsdale Boulevard | 4,520 | 13 |
| 8 | Route 92, eastbound, p.m. – San Mateo/Alameda County 1.5 mile east of beginning of San Mateo Bridge to I-880 | 4,230 | 5 |
| 9 | Route 237, eastbound, p.m. – Santa Clara County North First Street to I-880 | 3,470 | 10 |
| 10 | I-880, northbound, a.m. – Alameda County 0.5 mile south of Grand Avenue to San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge | 3,380 | 15 |

* During the period and direction indicated

More Trucks, More Miles, More Service

The Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) added another 41 miles to its coverage in July, filling in gaps in service areas, and boosting the total mileage in the tow truck network to more than 400 (for a map, visit <www.mtc.ca.gov/projects/fsp/fspmap.htm>). At the same time, hours were extended on two existing “beats.”

To expedite all this additional work, the FSP added seven new trucks to its fleet, bringing the total up to 74.

FSP tow trucks stop more than 9,000 times a month to help moto-

rists with car trouble (free of charge), remove hazardous debris or quickly clear accidents along the Bay Area’s most congested freeways.

The FSP is jointly operated by MTC’s Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways along with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol.



Napa Valley Public Transit Services Consolidated

Buses and vans in the Napa Valley are beginning to sport pristine white paint jobs and new logos after a three-year effort to consolidate public transit in the county reached a successful climax this summer.

As a result of a memorandum of understanding signed by the cities of Calistoga, St. Helena, Napa and American Canyon, the town of Yountville and Napa County,



fixed-route and paratransit contract management has been turned over to the Napa County Transportation Planning Agency (NCTPA), effectively making the agency the transit authority for Napa Valley, and reducing the number of transit operators in the county from six to one.

Two separate, fixed-route bus networks have been merged into a new service called the “VINE,” a new logo and marketing image have been developed, a new paratransit operator has been selected to link door-to-door services for seniors and disabled riders to fixed-route services wherever possible, and public transit services provided by vans in American Canyon, Yountville, St. Helena and Calistoga are being improved.

Ann Flemer, MTC’s deputy director for operations, commended the Napa agency and cited the cooperative approach adopted by the county as “a good example of the way MTC can encourage good planning practices among the region’s cities and counties.” MTC provided the initial funds for NCTPA’s efforts.

The economies of scale that occur through consolidation will free up funds for system expansion.

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- Column text box width: 1.8” (except for the Calendar, where it is 1.65”). We have inserted starter text boxes in each of the columns. These will change size, of course, when you flow in your copy, according to the length and design of the story article.
- Similarly, the above applies to the column rules. We have drawn starter rules, but these will change size according to your article length and design needs. Please note that they are perfectly centered between the columns and they begin at the hangline.
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